

not been born in periods of tranquility or of deep religious consciousness. They are weapons of war, offensive and defensive. And so far from producing unity of belief their meridian line has been the central line of storms. This was certain to be from their very structure and method. They were stringent, unelastic, without provision for growth. They assumed to be the voice of bodies of men collectively divinely inspired, and, in a modified sense, infallible.

4. Thus constituted, creeds have put themselves in the place of the Bible. Under a plea of interpreting sacred Scripture they have demanded of the faithful that they shall see the Scripture only through the creed. Even to-day no clergyman on trial for heresy in any national or provincial church would be allowed to defend himself by showing that the creed and the Bible were at disagreement.

It is not lawful in a church court to appeal from the creed to the Bible. A licentiate in swearing to accept the creed agrees to regard it as the substance of Scripture. Creeds that began merely as expository became mandatory. When the Church held the State in its hands, the creeds became arbiter of one's liberty, property, and life. Thousands have been slaughtered for denying the dogma of transubstantiation.

Thus creeds which misinterpreted the Scripture, which were full of false philosophy, which were based on false and mental philosophy and on notions of civil government now antiquated or utterly perished, have proved audacious, despotic, and cruel. Protestant creeds have asserted less authority, but have imposed upon the liberty of men by moral influences in a manner scarcely less cruel than if it had been restrained by the civil government.

Such has been the change in the lines and methods of human thought that creeds have lost much of their authority and significance. Men who do not believe them will not change them. The spirit of the age does not express itself in them. Taught in seminaries they are now partially abandoned in active pastoral life. They are crumbling castles, no longer holding the neighborhood in subjection, and so lapidated that they no longer are inhabited, and the guns are gone with the garrison. As a part of the history of the human mind

they are interesting; but as aids to human thought they are in most of their contents gone into disuse. They are gravestones which mark the tombs of dead beliefs.

There is but one road to Christian unity. It is in turning the back upon formularies of doctrine which are not authoritative, which are valuable only or chiefly as historical landmarks, and going back to the one creed which is a unifier because it is a simple statement of historical Christianity, not a complicated philosophy of the universe. If there ever is a church universal, with a common faith, the symbol of that faith will be, if not in exact phraseology, at least in spirit and essence, the Apostles' Creed. It is the earliest; the nearest the Master; the simplest and purest; unstained by blood of persecution or smoke of battle; the unquestioned faith of the Christian church universal.—*Christian Union.*

At Jacob's Well.

On arriving at Jacob's Well, we found the mouth of it, which is in the middle of the ruins of a church, by which it was formerly surmounted, covered by two large stones. These we were unable to remove; but a half dozen sturdy Arabs, from a small hamlet close by, did the needful for us, in expectation, of course, of a due reward. The opening over the well is an orifice in a dome or arch, less than two feet in diameter. Our Samaritan friend was the first to enter. He held by a piece of rope, which we kept in our hands, till, swinging himself across the mouth of the well, probably so-called, he found footing on the margin of the excavation over which the dome extends. Mr. Smith and myself, dispensing with the superfluous parts of our dresses, followed his example, the Jew, Mordecai, keeping fast hold of the rope, till, with the assistance of Jacob, we got a firm footing beside him. The Arabs, entered, one after the other, without difficulty. All within was, hitherto darkness, but by the aid of a pocket of lucifers, we lighted our candles, and were able to look down the well to a considerable depth. It was now time to disclose our plan of operations to our native attendants. "Jacob," said we, "a friend of ours; an English traveler and minister (the Rev. Andrew Bonar, of Collace,) dropped the five books of Moses and other inspired records into this well, about three

years ago, and if you will descend and bring them up we shall give you a handsome bakshish!" "Bakshish!" said the Arabs, kindling at the sound, "if there is to be a bakshish in the case, we must have it, for we are the lords of the land." "Well, down you go," said we, throwing the rope over their shoulders, "and you shall have the bakshish." "Nay, verily," said they, "you mean to hang us; let Jacob do what he pleases." Jacob was ready at our command; and when he had tied the rope round his body, below the shoulders, he received our parting instructions. We asked him to call out to us the moment he should arrive at the surface of the water, and told him we should so hold the rope as to prevent him from sinking if there was any considerable depth of the element. We told him also to pull out one of the candles with which he had stored his breast, and to ignite it when he might get below. As he looked into the fearful pit on the brink of which he stood, terror took hold of him, and he betook himself to prayer in the Hebrew tongue. We, of course, gave him no interruption in his solemn exercises, as, in the circumstances of the case, we could not but admire the spirit of the devotion which he evinced. On a signal given, we left him go. The Arabs assisted in holding the ropes, and we took care that he should descend as gently as possible. When our material was nearly exhausted he called out, "I have reached the bottom; and it is at present scarcely covered with water." Forthwith he kindled his light; and, that he might have every advantage, we threw him down a quantity of dry sticks, with which he made a blaze, which distinctly showed us the whole of the well, from the top to the bottom. We saw the end of the rope at the lower part; and we put a knot upon it at the margin above, that we might have the exact measurement when Jacob might come up. After searching for about five minutes for the Bible among the stones and mud at the bottom, our kind friend joyfully cried out, "It is found! it is found!" We were not slow, it may be supposed, in giving him our congratulations. The prize he carefully put into his breast; and then he declared his readiness, with our aid, to make the ascent. Ready, however, he was not to move. He was evidently much frightened at the journey

before him to the light of day; and he was not slow to confess his fears. "Never mind," cried Mordecai to him from the top, on observing his alarm, "you will get up by the help of the God of Jacob." He betook himself again to prayer, in which he continued for a much longer time than before his descent. When we got him in motion, he dangled very uncomfortably in the air, and complained much of the cutting of the rope next his armpits. By and by he became silent. We found it no easy matter to get him pulled up, and we had to keep the rope from the edge of the well, lest it should snap asunder. When he came into our hands he was unable to speak, and we laid him down on the margin of the well, that he might collect his breath. "Where is the backshish?" were first words he uttered on regaining his faculty of speech. It was immediately forthcoming to the extent of about a sovereign, to his fullest satisfaction. A similar sum we distributed among our Arab attendants. The book from having been so long stepped in water and mud below, was with the exception of the boards, reduced to a pulp. In our effort to recover it we had ascertained the depth of the well, which is exactly 75 feet. Its diameter is about 9 feet. It is entirely hewn out of the solid rock, and is a work of great labor. It bears marks about it of the greatest antiquity. "The well is deep," was the description given in by the Woman of Samaria to our Lord. It still, as now noticed, has the same character, although, to a considerable extent, it is, perhaps filled with the stones that are thrown into it to sound it by travelers and pilgrims.—*Dr. Wilson's "Lands of the Bible."*

John Knox's Courtship.

A curious anecdote of Knox's marriage to Lord Ochiltree's daughter is contained in a letter written by Mr. Robert Miller, minister of Paisley, to Wodrow, the historian of the sufferings of the Church of Scotland, dated November 15, 1722. It is as follows:

John Knox, before the night of the Reformation broke up, traveled among several honest families in the west of Scotland, who were converts to the Protestant religion. Particularly he visited oft Lord Ochiltree's family, preaching the gospel privately to those who were willing to receive it. The lady